

First Tanzanian Earth Day Celebrated at Gibb's Farm



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KARATU, TANZANIA - Believed to be the first community Earth Day for Tanzania, its 40th anniversary on April 22nd was marked at Gibb's Farm, itself a historic coffee plantation welcoming travelers starting 45 years ago. The occasion helped participants better understand how the historic coffee farm has been a leader in sustainable farming and tourism. Many examples found at Gibb's Farm were included in the daylong event of painting, athletics and awareness-based activities.

Founders Margaret and James Gibb concerned themselves with the ecological responsibility of the farm soon after they started to manage it in 1948. Their stewardship of the land, community and wildlife have long been a focus of the 80 year-old operation. Opportunities to advance these efforts continue to mature since recent renovations. Special Earth Day events were organized at the farm to mark the occasion and also to broaden the understanding for a cleaner, greener way of life.

Three events were designed by staff leadership that typically conducts twice annual employee Olympics. The first event was the Earth Relay. This was a test of ecology-knowledge runners shouted to answer questioning judges before sprinting their baton back to a teammate. Eighteen runners competed in three teams.

Questions included: ways to reduce carbon footprint, ways to reduce energy usage, preferred ways to dry cloths, plant water filtration facts, the purpose of large windows in every farm cottage, name four of the ten gardens at Gibb's Farm, solar water heating facts, steps for separating refuse, and recent environmental awards received.

In the estate's staff village traditional building technology and materials have been used to example sustainable and affordable housing. Within the walls of the dining hall Uhai (Swahili for life), three more teams engaged in the Earth Day Painting competition. The captains with their team of six were challenged to fine-tune their graffiti and painting skill carrying the theme of "reduce, reuse and recycle," judicious use of natural resources, and sustainable development. Each team was provided with paints, brushes, pencils, and erasers to finish their task in one and half hour. Locating the community art in a facility used daily by everyone was a clever way to extend the awareness beyond the day and past Earth Week scheduled a few months later. The walls are planned for repainting in time for the second annual Earth Day Wall Painting.